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## Lingle administration focused on innovation

Solutions will be driven by structural fixes, private sector

*By Theodore E. Liu*

When Aloha Airlines first announced its business decision to cease its passenger service and then its cargo operations, many politicians and other pundits immediately turned to government to intervene. Many at the Legislature and even our daily newspapers and others called on the administration to "summon a roundtable" or convene a blue ribbon task force to address the situation.

However instead of meetings to talk about the crisis, ever since the administration first became aware of Aloha's situation Gov. Linda Lingle and her cabinet were focused on taking action. Talk was certainly not what Hawai'i residents and businesses needed. What was needed was clear analysis, leadership and action.

The administration determined very early that it was market dynamics that caused Aloha's difficulties and that direct government intervention in the face of these market-driven conditions, such as rising fuel costs, would be futile.

Confident that the solution was going to be private-sector driven and that the markets would stabilize and self-correct, the administration's primary concern was to ensure that Aloha's employees were treated lawfully, that stranded passengers were accommodated and that critical supplies relating to health and safety continued to be transported uninterrupted.

Working closely with airlines and cargo carriers, the administration assisted in developing contingency plans for alternative passenger and cargo service. This included coordinating with carriers to facilitate the addition of flights and service, bringing in new aircraft, and linking businesses with appropriate cargo carriers that have sufficient capacity to meet shipping needs.

As a result of these collaborative actions, passenger disruptions were kept to a minimum and there was no interruption in the timely delivery of any critical cargo supplies. Government played the role it should have — facilitating the market's adjustments.

While the administration is continuing to monitor the situation as the passenger and cargo markets stabilize, we feel it is equally important to implement a comprehensive approach to equip Hawai'i's economy and our businesses with the resiliency to meet the inevitable economic challenges our state has faced and will continue to face. The world around Hawai'i has changed and we must adjust.

We will accomplish this by focusing on building the innovative capacity of our residents and businesses. Innovation, as it applies to the state's transportation sector, means adopting technologies to more efficiently use the \$5 billion of oil we import every year. Improving transportation sector efficiency and thereby reducing costs is a key part the Hawai'i Clean Energy Initiative.

Innovation also means adopting alternative and advanced transportation technologies, such as research into algae to create jet fuel and high-speed interisland ferries. The administration is also investing in critical public infrastructure, such as airports, harbors and highways. These long-term structural fixes will have more impact than any short-term talk.

These efforts are continuing to take place effectively, often behind the scenes. They don't require a news conference or a task force as some in the media have suggested. They require the type of focused attention, leadership and action that Gov. Lingle and her administration continue to demonstrate.

This proactive approach by our administration and the resiliency of the private sector to adapt and seize opportunities will ensure the long-term economic future of our state.

*Theodore E. Liu is director of the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. He wrote this commentary for The Advertiser.*

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